

**News Release***Communications New Brunswick***Human Rights Commission****Statement / International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (04/03/19)**

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The following statement was issued by Dr. Patrick Malcolmson, chair of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission, to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. MEDIA CONTACT: Dr. Patrick Malcolmson, 1-888-471-2233 or 506-453-2301. Website: <http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/index.htm>.

FREDERICTON (CNB) - "On March 21, we are reminded of the invaluable contributions that people of all races and ethnic groups have made to New Brunswick society, and the hardships that many of them have faced because of racism.

While many of the most blatant examples of racism and racial discrimination have largely disappeared since the adoption of the New Brunswick Human Rights Act in 1967, we cannot say that racism and racial discrimination have entirely disappeared here. The racist signs posted at UNB last October and the conflicts between Natives and non-Natives are high profile reminders of this.

However, they are exceptional. Most racism and racial discrimination never makes the news. Similarly, very few discrimination and harassment complaints filed with the Human Rights Commission ever become public.

Over the last few years, the commission's educational program to counter racism and other discrimination has often focused on schools and students. Schools are one of the places where racism is learned and where it is most visibly expressed through racial slurs. The commission's activities have included teachers guides, videos, contests and workshops for teachers and students. It also developed a web page defining racism and suggesting how to counter it: <http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/sayno.htm>.

This year, the commission will be delivering a series of workshops to show the true costs of discrimination and harassment in the workplace, as well as the benefits to employers of a diverse workforce and a respectful workplace. In effect, we will be making the business case for human rights.

The sick time and low morale caused by harassment, the recruitment and retraining costs resulting from employee turnover, the loss of skilled applicants due to hiring discrimination, and the money and time spent dealing with human rights complaints are all very real, and so are the benefits of hiring employees from diverse backgrounds who are able to forge and maintain commercial ties to their racial or ethnic communities of origin.

In fact, with immigration being essential to counter a declining population, it may not be an exaggeration to say that the very future of our province will depend on our ability to make racial and ethnic minorities feel welcome and valued here. It is vitally important that we do so, for all of us.

With these thoughts in mind, I invite all New Brunswickers to join with us on March 21 and throughout the year in a renewed commitment to counter racism and intolerance and to promote the value of respect and diversity."

04/03/19

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